Amendments to the Drawings:

The Office Action at page 2 objected to the drawings as having reference numerals written by hand. Applicant respectfully traverses this objection. Formal drawings were filed August 16, 2004, which is indicated on the page 1 Office Action Summary. Applicant has reviewed those drawings and found there are no handwritten numerals present thereon, rather, they are formal drawings, thus, Applicant disagrees with Examiner's assertion that handwritten numerals are present. Applicant inquires if Examiner in fact may have inadvertently directed this comment to the informal drawings with handwritten numerals that were first filed with the application as-filed. Thus for drawing sheets 2-4 and 6-8 no replacement sheets are submitted.

The attached replacement or sheets of drawings (1/8 and 5/8) includes changes to Figures 1, 9 and 10 and replace the original sheet containing those figures.

Reference numeral "46" had been inadvertently used twice. In Figure 9, reference numeral "46" is changed to "47".

In Figure 1 reference numeral 10 has been added. In Figure 2, reference numeral "62" and "66" have been added.

Attachments following last page of this Amendment:

Replacement Sheet (2 pages numbered 1/8 and 5/8)
Annotated Sheet Showing Change(s) (2 pages)

Remarks

Claims 1-15 and 22 have been withdrawn from present consideration.

The Specification is amended to correct the inadvertent double use of the reference numeral "47".

The Specification is amended to overcome the objection noted by Examiner in regard to claims 20 and 23. It is believed that the subject of claims 20 and 23 was already discussed in the text of the original application in the Summary section and e.g. at page 5, lines 1-8. Nonetheless, to advance the prosecution, the specification has been amplified by an addition, indicated in the foregoing above, at page 5 after line 29. No new matter has been entered.

Support for Amendments and New Claims

The amendment to claim 16 and the subject of new independent claim 27 are supported in the specification at e.g. original claim 1, Figures 7-8 and Fig. 10, and at page 4, 3rd para. of the "Detailed Description" and page 5, 1st full paragraph.

Claim 19 is amended to recite better antecedence with claim 16 by changing "integral" to "integrated" in the last line.

Claims 24-30 are added. The subject matter of claims 24 and 28 is disclosed e.g. in original claim 3 and Figure 8, and in the specification at page 4, 3rd para. of the "Detailed Description". The subject matter of claims 25 and 29 is disclosed e.g. in part original claim 4, in original Figure 10, and in the specification at page 5, 1st full paragraph. The subject matter of claims 26 and 30 is disclosed e.g. in original claim 5 and Figure 7.

New independent claim 31 contains the subject matter of original claims 16, 19 and 21.

Thus, no new matter has been entered.

Substantive Rejections

Claims 16-20 and 23 have been rejected under Sec. 102 under Gooding Pat. 4,200,976. Claims 20 and 23 have in addition been rejected as obvious over Gooding '976. Claim 21 has been rejected under Sec. 103 as obvious over Gooding further in view of Shurland Pat. 4,932,122.

The structure of Gooding uses numerous webs 11c spaced along the extent of the blades, and each blade is welded to the cross web 11c at multiple locations along the length of the blade. Gooding emphasizes that he uses very narrow blades (col 2, lines 9-15), and secures them at multiple locations to prevent distortion, even to the point of specifying non-contact welding via electron-beam welding or laser (col. 2 lines 20-24) so as to avoid distortion of the blade cage. Because in Gooding the securement of each blade to support webs at multiple locations along its length is paramount, there is no teaching or suggestion in Gooding to secure the blade only at their ends, which teaches away from the advantage recognized by amended claim 16 that the blades can more closely conform to skin surfaces being shaved. Thus, amended claim 16 is believed allowable. For like reasons, it is also believed that claim 1 is allowable and should be re-joined.

The obviousness rejection of combining Gooding with the clips of Shurland is respectfully traversed. New claim 31 is presented directed to the features of original claim 21 rewritten in independent form including the features of original base claim 16 and intervening claim 19, thus reciting that the welded unit is held in place by a pair of metal clips.

The rejection is believed to be based on the use of impermissible hindsight. The law holds that it is error to reconstruct the claimed invention from the prior art by using the Applicant's claim as a blueprint. The motivation to combine different parts of the references must come from the references themselves or some other motivation other than the hindsight obtained from the invention itself. Interconnect Planning Corp. v. Feil, 774 F.2d 1132 (Fed. Cir. 1985). Thus, it is insufficient that the prior art disclosed the elements of the claimed invention,

either separately or in combination; there must be some teaching, suggestion or incentive to make the combination claimed by the inventor. See Northern Telecom, Inc. v. Datapoint Corp., 908 F.2d 931 (Fed. Cir. 1990).

Gooding is acutely concerned with maintaining precise blade-to-blade spacing of the narrow blades welded onto his pre-formed welded unit. This pre-formed unit is held into the housing by a snap-fit provided by the webs 11a on an undercut 10b, see Figure 2. As part of the fitting, the rearward stepped web 11b rests on a stepped portion 10c. Gooding states this is done to ensure the appropriate geometrical relationship of the blade unit with the guard surface 10a to provide the correct blade shaving angle, the blade exposure (also called "protrusion"), and the tangent length, see column 2, lines 36-41. Gooding discloses an alternate holding arrangement, at column 3 lines 12-20, that dispenses with the plastic housing and forms a guard as a metal surface on the blade-web integral unit, and attaches that larger blade assembly directly to a handle. Applicant disagrees with the statement in the Office Action that "snap-fit connections generally require tight tolerances." Rather, the reverse is more accurate, because the resilient member of the snap-fit pair is flexible and takes up any slack or tolerance. There is for example no tight tolerance at the region of abutment between rear web leg 11b and abutment surface 10c, and the webs 11c are flexible metal straps that will conform to whatever the undercut 10b is. Gooding locks his blades down into a static framework and interconnects the blades to one another via intermediate webs 11cin order to ensure his blade geometry, then either (a) secures that unit into a plastic housing without the use of an additional assembly component (i.e. without clips) or (b) dispenses with the plastic housing altogether and welds a guard bar to the web, thus keeping the blade-web cage entirely of metal and keeping his blade geometry entirely self-contained within the welded unit. There is no suggestion in Gooding that the snap-fit of Figure 2 is too tight a tolerance, and one of skill in the art would appreciate that it conforms to any tolerances already by itself rather than creates a problem. Applicant respectfully suggests Examiner is positing a problem that does not exist only to "solve" it by foreign elements taken from the Shurland reference, and thereby impermissibly using hindsight. To the extent Gooding suggests departing from a snap-fit, it is to dispense completely with not only a blade housing (the

feature of dependent claim 19 which is in new claim 31) but also any extraneous, separate retaining structure (such as the clip of dependent claim 21 which is in new claim 31). Furthermore, the clips Shurland would be superfluous to Gooding. Gooding has already locked in his blade geometry with the snap-fit or the welded guard bar, because he uses narrow, fixed welded blades that are interconnected to one another. In contrast, the clips of Shurland are used to retain otherwise loose, spring-mounted blades, because the blades are not interconnected, not snap-fit or welded in. The blades of Shurland rest on spring fingers 18. The clips 40 are used, as stated in column 4, lines 8-10, to clamp in place the guard bar 24 and the blades 28 which are received in vertical slots 42. This type of arrangement is practiced e.g. in Applicant's assignee's well-known product the Sensor® razor. One of skill in the art understands that the underside of the clips 40 is what sets the blade exposure (the underside of clips 40 typically being flat) and the spacing of slots 42 setting the inter-blade span distance. This is a radically different arrangement of components than in Gooding. There is no problem or motivation for improvement remaining in Gooding for which the clips of Shurland provide a solution, certainly not one that is consistent with the underlying, fundamental teaching of Gooding to have the blade geometry self-defined by the blade supports. Furthermore, the use of the Shurland clips would also interfere with the cartridge mounting channel track (10f, 10f) of Gooding, since the Shurland clips wrap around to the underside of the housing --which in Shurland is center-mountable using shell bearings (44, 46) --, which would create an interference to mounting and render the Gooding cartridge useless for its intended purpose.

For the foregoing reasons new claim 31 is believed allowable, and for these additional reasons dependent claim 21 also believed non-obvious.

In light of the above remarks, it is requested that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejections. Early and favorable action in the case is respectfully requested.

New claim 27

New claim 27 includes original claim 16 and the features that the opposed longitudinal ends extend transverse to the cutting edge in a direction from the edge extending rearward, as shown in Figures 7, 12 or 13. This provides the suitable lands at which the weld connections are made in a lateral plane away from the plane of the cutting edges, as shown e.g. in Figures 8 or 10, to provide stability to the overall assembly as well as desirable conformance of the blades to the surface being shaved, which is not shown or suggested in the references of record including not in Gooding.

This response represents an earnest effort to place the application in proper form and to distinguish the invention as now claimed from the applied references. In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of this application, entry of the amendments presented herein, and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 07-1350, referencing Attorney Docket No. Z-03430 (8107).

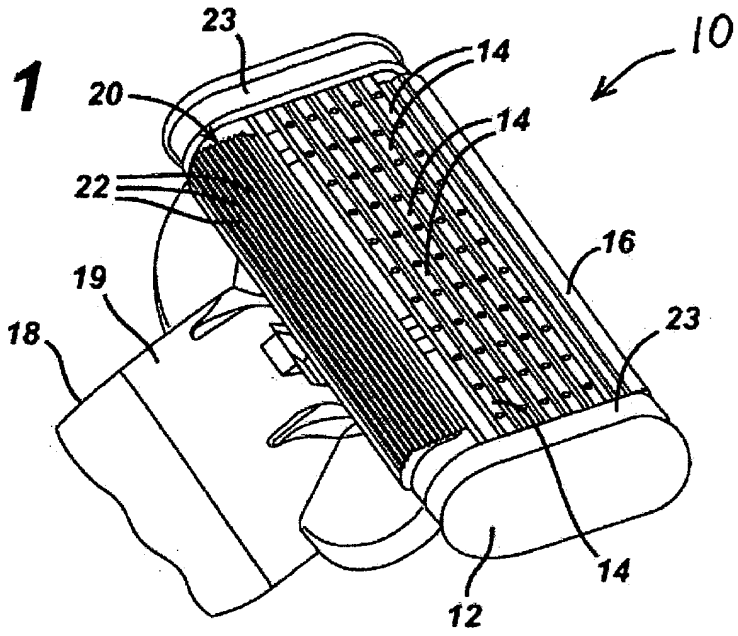
An Information Disclosure Statement was filed on April 4, 2006, receipt and review of which was not indicated in the Office Action mailed April 18, 2006.

Respectfully submitted,
THE GILLETTE COMPANY

By _____
Signature
Edward S. Podszus
Typed or Printed Name
Registration No. 35,983
(617) 421-7939

Date: 28 July 2006
Customer No. 27752
(Amendment-Response to Office Action.doc)
Revised 04/25/2006

FIG. 1



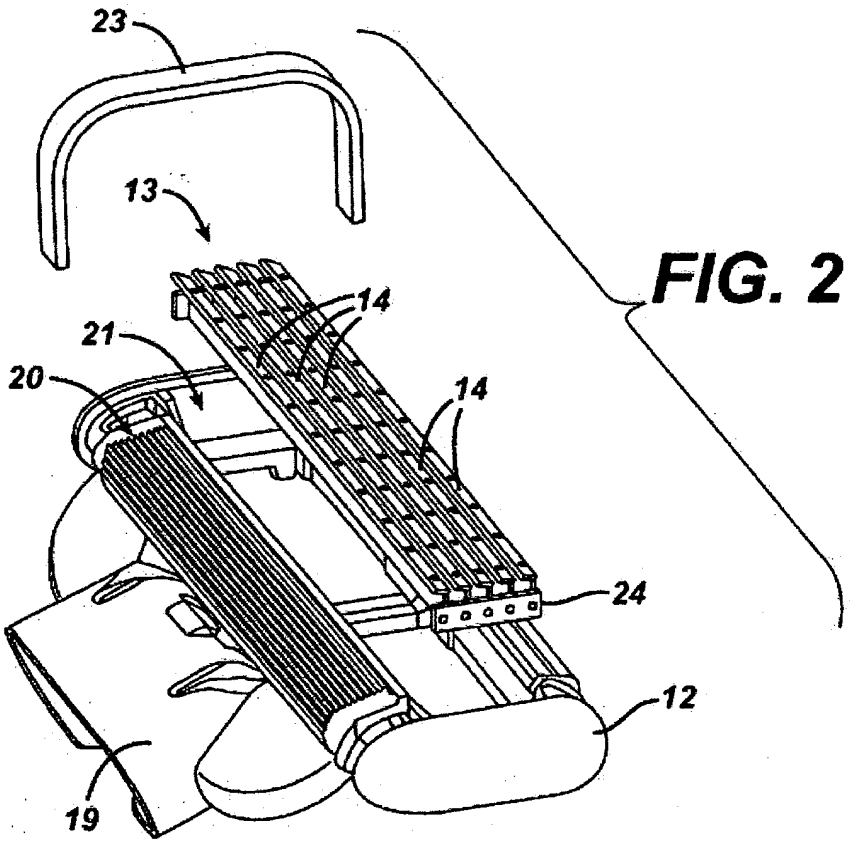
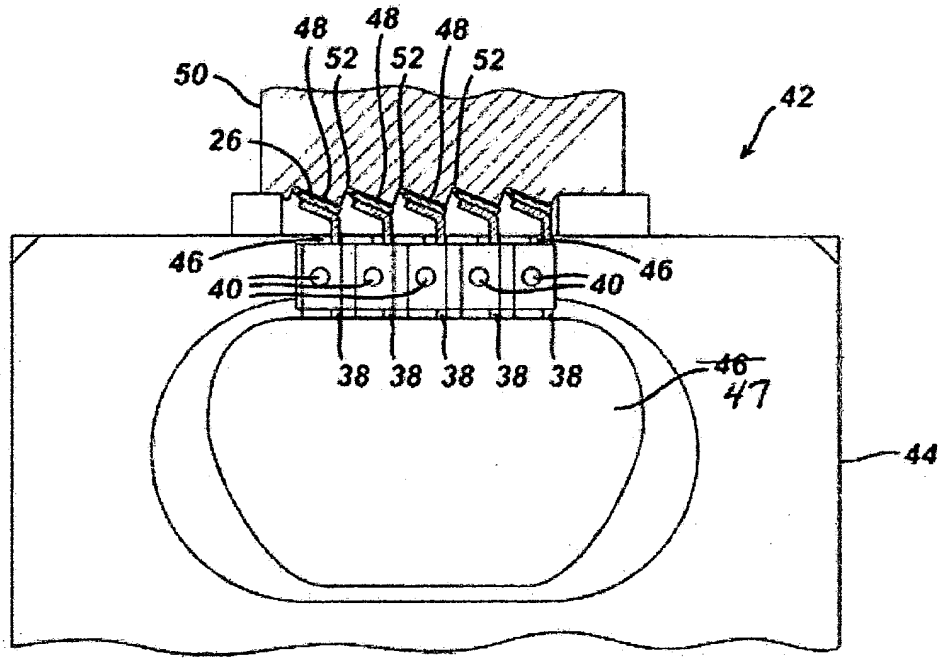


FIG. 2

FIG. 9



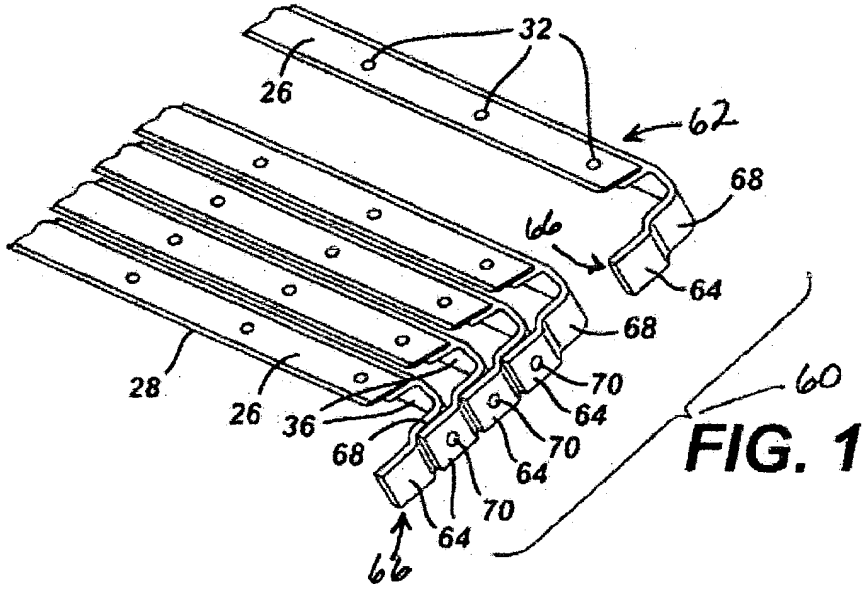


FIG. 10